



Weston County
USDA Service Center

Weston County FSA
1225 Washington
Blvd
Newcastle, WY
82701
(307) 746-2701

Office Hours:
Monday - Friday
8:00 am – 4:30 pm
www.fsa.usda.gov

County Committee
Joe Simmons,
Chairman
Monte Hamilton, V.
Chair
Doug Materi,
Member

Staff
Peggy Livingston,
CED
Jim Neill, COT
Katrina Perino, PT

Weston County News

November 2008

NEW COUNTY OFFICE EMPLOYEES

I am excited to share with you, that on August 29th, I was selected to replace Cindy Hottel as the County Executive Director for Weston County. I look forward to working with all of you and providing Weston County with the best possible service. I am also excited to share with you that Katrina Perino has accepted the position as Program Technician. Katrina will be starting on November 24th. For those of you who may not know Katrina, she is a native of Weston County. She and her husband are involved in a family ranching operation west of Newcastle. Please stop in when you get a chance and welcome her to the agency! Jim Neill, County Office Trainee, will be finishing his training in early December. Jim has been a great help to me the past several weeks. A **big** thank you Jim and good luck to you in the future!

NON-INSURED ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NAP)

December 1, 2008 is the application deadline for the Non-Insurable Assistance Program for forage (hay) crops, fall seeded grain crops that are intended to be harvested for hay, and grazing land. This deadline also includes **Spring Wheat** since Wheat is considered one crop (winter and spring) the earliest application deadline (December 1st) applies. The application service fee for NAP is \$250.00 per crop per county, with a county maximum of \$750.00. The fee cannot exceed a total of \$1,875.00 per producer with farming interests in multiple counties. **NOTE:** Producers must cover **all crops** in **all counties** where they have an interest to qualify for the new crop disaster program as outlined below.

2008 FARM BILL DISASTER PROGRAMS

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Act), Pub. L. 110-246, was enacted June 18, 2008. The 2008 Act created several new disaster programs under the title, "Supplemental Agricultural Disaster Assistance". To be eligible for the **SURE Crop Disaster Program**, producers **must** purchase at least CAT level of crop insurance for **all** insurable crops and NAP coverage for **all** non-insurable crops. ***IMPORTANT change:** Crops (including pasture grass) intended to be grazed are **not** required to be covered by crop insurance or NAP in order for regular crops harvested for grain or hay to be eligible for the SURE crop disaster program. *** Only those crops intended to be harvested as grain or hay must be covered by crop insurance or NAP to be eligible for SURE – this includes all interest in crops in all counties nationwide.** Another change announced is a crop, determined and certified by the applicant in writing; to not be of "economic significance" (which means the crop does not contribute at least 10 percent to the total farm revenue) is exempted from the crop insurance or NAP purchase requirements. *** LFP Livestock Forage**

Program: eligible acres of crops intended for grazing, i.e. pasture grass, are those covered by either: 1/ crop insurance under the PRF-VI policy – coverage is by the "grid" method, or 2/ NAP policy on all reported grazed acres within the applicants "unit" – all grazing land within the county operated by the applicant. ***IMPORTANT - Eligible acres** for the LFP program are: acres located in the PRF grid or grids (if this is the policy you hold) **or** acres included in the NAP unit (if this is the policy you hold). Remember, if you operate two farms in Weston County and choose to only purchase PRF on one farm and not the other and LFP becomes available, you will only be paid on the acres you have insured, not your entire operation. If a producer's pasture grass is located in three crop insurance "grids" and they purchase a PRF policy on only one grid, they cannot obtain a NAP policy to cover the land in the other two grids. **The above changes for the SURE and LFP programs are important because of the confusion related to the crop insurance or NAP purchase requirements as originally announced by FSA and by crop insurance agents.** With the fast approaching crop insurance and NAP policy purchase deadlines producers should keep the above changes in mind when buying a policy. Remember – crop insurance and NAP, for all grain and all forage (hay) crops, are only required if a producer wants to be eligible to participate in the SURE crop disaster program. Keep in mind that if the "eligibility to participate" clause is met it does not guarantee a crop loss payment. There are additional loss requirements that must be met before a payment is triggered. Also, if a producer wants to be eligible to participate in the LFP program they must purchase either crop insurance – by grids, or purchase NAP. Eligible LFP acres with crop insurance are those "grid" acres. A payment is triggered only when certain loss thresholds have been met. Watch for more detailed information about these and other farm bill disaster programs in future newsletters.

Important dates:

November 30...Purchase private Crop Insurance PRF-VI policy

December 1...NAP policy deadline

1. All non-insurable perennial forage (grass hay and any Grass/Alfalfa (or other) that is not insurable for various reasons as certified by a crop insurance agent)
2. Pasture

3. Wheat intended for hay (forage) – includes winter wheat and spring wheat
4. Honey
5. Fish

COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

FSA's county committee system is very important to the administration of FSA programs to this country's farmers and ranchers. Ballots for the upcoming elections will be mailed in November. Please take the time to actively participate in the election process and return the ballots by December 1st. The election this year is for Local Administrative Area 3 which is approximately the southern one third of the county (that area south of Township 45 North from west to east). Joe Simmons has dedicated a significant amount of his personal time to represent this administrative area the past 8 years. Because of term limits for the committee, Joe will not be able to seek re-election. I personally would like to thank Joe for a job well done, his dedication and support to this office and to his constituents was outstanding and we will miss him. If you live in this area and do not get a ballot by November 24th and would like to vote please let our office know.

ACCURATE RECORDS

We cannot stress enough how important it is for producers to ensure that our office has accurate records. This includes updated records on all of your farming interests (all grain, forage and grazing crops, and livestock interest for livestock disaster programs) in this county and all others – nationwide, as well as deeded, share rent, cash lease and AUM grazing on all leases and agreements. We are continuing to update the Global Information System (GIS) maps, which are replacing the aerial photography. In early October this office mailed each owner/operator in Weston County and asked that you set up a time to come into the office and verify that we have accurately transferred data from the aerial photography to the GIS maps. If you have not already made an appointment, please do so. There can be differences in the acres accounted for between the two systems and your input is critical to the accuracy of our records, as we proceed into the new 2009 Farm Bill year. Additionally, when completing paperwork in our office you should ensure that your name, (either as an individual or as an entity - such as a trust), your id numbers (including social security and entity id numbers), and address are correct. Incorrect information can delay benefits to you. Each time you file an application or contract, please ensure all information is correct.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE RAIN AND HAIL SURVEY - CoCoRaHS

CoCoRaHS collects weather data from volunteers in a county to track weather patterns and effects. Data is collected on rainfall, snow, temperature and severe storm conditions and damages. Wyoming FSA has been participating in this program for several years now and through this volunteer effort we are able to see on a more detailed level the weather patterns of Weston County. Before CoCoRaHS implementation Weston County had only a couple of National Weather Service (NOAA) reporting stations but now, with CoCoRaHS volunteers, there are 8 weather reporting stations in the county! The benefits of having more reporting stations are obvious – we have a more detailed view of Weston County weather. Recently, it was made known to this office that the “Drought Monitor” system is now also reviewing CoCoRaHS data in determining what classification of drought a county is experiencing. In the past the drought monitor has, for the most part, been fairly accurate. However, discrepancies were found in the data mostly because of the lack of data to substantiate a more detailed analysis of drought conditions. For example, past drought monitor designations could only include the 1 or 2 NOAA stations in the county and as a result, areas that we know suffered a more severe drought did not receive such designation due to the lack of data to document such claims. In years past, before a disaster program(s) could be implemented in Weston County certain data needed reviewed and specific severity of drought conditions had to be met before we were approved for a disaster program. One set of data that required review was the Drought Monitor. If certain levels of drought designations (such as a classification rating of a “D2”) were not met in the monitor rating then a county was not eligible for assistance – thus our producers were not eligible. The new Livestock Forage Program (LFP) in the 2008 farm bill requires such Drought Monitor triggers. If certain designations are not met then there are no programs for disaster relief. I stated that with the addition of the CoCoRaHS program there are now 8 weather reporting stations in the county. Unfortunately, of these 8 there are only 5 that are active in reporting data. The loss of data from the 3 non-active sites could be critical in future implementation of various disaster programs and in the least, provide inaccurate data for the area of the non-active station. I encourage you, if you are a CoCoRaHS volunteer, to please report your weather data. Your data could make all the difference in disaster program eligibility for Weston County. If you would like to become a CoCoRaHS volunteer please contact me. I can possibly get you set up with some free equipment.

SIGNATURE AUTHORITY

Many of you conduct your farm operation as an entity such as a corporation, trust, LLC, LLP, etc... In order for you to conduct business with Farm Service Agency, we are required to have documentation from you that shows who has authority to sign on the entity's behalf such as a Corporate Resolution, Power of Attorney, or other acceptable Delegation of Authority. This is a reminder for newly formed entities that we need a copy of the minutes of your annual meeting or other documentation that shows the selection of the officers or the positions of the members and who has authority to sign FSA program documents. For signature authority for FSA and CCC programs, husbands and wives can sign documents on behalf of each other for programs in which either has an interest unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to this office. Spouses may not grant Power of Attorney for each other and may not sign claim settlements for each other. And, producers and landlords who previously executed a FSA-211 Power of Attorney form authorizing an attorney-in-fact to act on

their behalf for programs need to check with this office to be sure this form is still current with the new farm programs.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)

CRP is a voluntary program that helps agricultural producers enhance environmentally sensitive land. Producers who choose to enroll in CRP, plant long-term, resource-conserving covers to improve water quality, control soil erosion and enhance habitats for waterfowl and wildlife. In return, USDA provides producers with rental payments. After environmental compliance requirements are complete, USDA will announce a sign up date, however, the Continuous CRP program is still an option. The Continuous CRP is designed for environmentally desirable land devoted to certain eligible practices. **Important note:** Agricultural Secretary Schafer announced that USDA will fully implement an incentive to farmers and ranchers to open up their land enrolled in CRP to the public for hunting, fishing, bird watching and other recreational activities. The public access incentive will pay \$3 per acre, per year, for the life of the CRP contract, provided the contract acres remain enrolled in the state public access program. This incentive will be available to CRP participants with new or existing CRP contracts. For additional information contact our office.

ADDITIONAL FARM BILL PROGRAMS

A few more disaster programs are provided for in the 2008 farm bill. Direct/Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) will be back as well as a new crop base payment program called Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE). DCP will be administered like it has been in the past and will have “direct” payments and “counter-cyclical (CC) payments when the market triggers are met. ACRE provides for direct payments like DCP but instead of CC payments a producer will receive a payment based on the number of acres planted of a contract crop. More detailed information will be coming out in the near future.

Other items of importance in the new farm bill are a restructuring of the Person and Payment Limitation program with a host of other eligibility and program items being redesigned – some with major changes.

We may hold informational meetings to explain the new programs and provisions. Watch for further information in future newsletters.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

November 11 -	Veteran's Day (Office Closed)
November 27 -	Thanksgiving Day (Office Closed)
November 30 -	Crop Insurance policy deadline
December 1 -	NAP deadline
December 1 -	Deadline for returning Election Ballots
December 8 -	Election Ballots to be Counted
December 25 -	Christmas Day (Office Closed)
December 31st -	Last day to sign up for Wool Loan Deficiency Payments

For more information on any Farm Service Agency program, visit or call our office, or visit the FSA Homepage at www.fsa.usda.gov

Have a great day!

*/s/ Peggy M. Livingston,
County Executive Director*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotope, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Special Accommodations will be made for the physically handicapped, vision- or hearing-impaired person upon request. If accommodations are required, please call Peggy Livingston, CED at (307)746-2701.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
Weston County FSA
1225 Washington Blvd
Newcastle, WY 82701

Return Service Requested